

Talking Points on Suriname  
for NSPG -- 19 December 1986

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Bouterse appears to have backed away from his campaign against the insurgents for now in the hope of warding off intervention sentiment in the West.

- Last week, he uncharacteristically asked political party leaders for advice on measures to stem any invasion and agreed to a revised electoral timetable.
- Our Embassy believes, however, that Bouterse would disregard this timetable if he defeats the insurgents.

Bouterse has so far failed to act against moderates pushing for democratization, probably because he perceives that their nominal participation lends his regime some legitimacy.

- We believe he would react violently, however, to strong evidence that any of these leaders were cooperating with Western governments against him.
- We continue to believe that Prime Minister Radhakishun expects outside help and that key democratic groups would welcome intervention.

While we have seen no indications of attacks specifically directed against the 3,000 to 6,000 Dutch nationals, we believe that the risk is real and would increase if, as we expect, the security situation deteriorates further.

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All in all, we have no evidence that Bouterse has altered his overall objectives or methods in any significant way. He remains capable of lashing out at suspected enemies.

- We believe military death squads may be still operating in Paramaribo.
- Rumors are circulating that preparations are underway for large scale arrests of business and political leaders, including some cabinet members.

The bottom line is that Bouterse is unlikely to give up power voluntarily, and that there will be heavier fighting again soon. The insurgents probably have the capability and resolve to continue their

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activities. As long as Bouterse is unable to defeat the rebels militarily, the likelihood will grow that he will succumb to offers of outside assistance.

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[redacted] that six Libyans have arrived in the capital. [redacted] that they may be Islamic Call Society officials.

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-- We cannot confirm [redacted] that there are up to 100 Libyans fighting with government forces. [redacted] there may be 2-10 Libyan soldiers in eastern Suriname.

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